

# Your full name won't fit the form

by Carlos A. Pittella



"Last Wish" by Daria Konshtik

The Latin tongue made *Exocoetus*  
out of the Ancient Greek ??????????, meaning  
“sleeping outside” (literally “outside bed”),  
which gave the family name *Exocoetidae*  
to all flying fish stranded midair.

How many layers of bureaucracy  
to trap a flying fish? A stubborn one  
that flaps and flaps overboard  
slipping away through oil,  
the natural oil of your hands...

It’s a freak accident my surname  
ended up with so many double consonants:  
you catch a ‘t’ — here’s another  
to cross; you lick an ‘l’ — its twin  
lingers below your borrowed tongue.

I often wonder, what is the fraying line  
between boat and ocean? Of course  
it’s *not* drowning, but that’s just  
fishermen-talk. For the actual fish flapping  
it’s not crushing under a wall of air.

So I flap and I jack through layers,  
geologic layers of documents,  
as I wade into a new sea,  
the same water rebaptized  
by tiny owners.

Siegfried and Roy cannot agree  
on one, so they have named it  
Siegfried’s sea / Roy’s sea  
while the fish (slithering between)  
files more paperwork to just breathe.

Adult diapers  
and all sorts of unrecyclable plastic  
clog the way, catching on scales,  
and they don’t need permits

to float an island of crap.

I, who want to flap unlabeled once,  
need a form to subsist and by “form”

I mean not my metamorphic body  
but plant tissue dissolving in waters  
of an acidic language. The tides

are turning — tsk tsk — churning,  
and we are all about to butter.

It took me eight years for my first renaming.

I forget how many countries have notarized  
this improper fish of molting names

and I’ve now swallowed the scientific one  
and have no intention to spell it out

lest they give me another  
fucking “*sapiens sapiens*” form  
to sign with my bare tail.